Hymn "Rv-2.1" hints at an Introductory Speech given by the Rigvedic Poet VR Patil (email:vrpmet@yahoo.com)

Introduction:

Based on the internal literally evidence, Vedic scholars have divided the **Ten Mandalas** of Rigved into two groups. Mandala-2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 are termed as the Five Early Mandalas and Mandala-5, 8, 9, 1 and 10 are treated as the Five Late Mandalas of Rigved [1, 2].

On the basis of the information traced on the **Family Tree of Bharata clan**, the order of the composition of the **Five Early Mandalas** is found to be **Mandala-2**, **3**, **4**, **6** and **7**.

Once it is accepted that the **Mandala-2** is the **Earliest Composed Mandala of Rigved**, then the basic question arises, which is the **first composed "Poem of Praise of Rigved"**?

There are **43 hymns** in **Mandala-2 of Rigved** that are believed to have composed by **Grtsamada** the **Lead Composer of Mandala-2** and his family members.

After the scrutiny of all 43 Praise-songs, the hymn Rv-2.1 addressed to Agni is found to be the best suited song to consider as the starting point of Rigved. This is because, in this hymn, the Composer has cryptically presented Agni as the host of Yajna ceremony. Therefore, Poet has composed the said hymn in such a way that as if God Agni has authorised him to conduct the entire function. Through the composed Song, the Master of ceremony/Poet decides to welcome all the Guests arrived at the site of Yajna and then starts introducing all the Deities one by one. However, the Composer plays a trick here and just to please his master/Agni, he introduces every Deity invited for Yajna purposely looking at Agni/ the Fire God. Hence, he begins most of verses of the hymn with the term carily/tvamagne/ O Agni.

In other words, the Poet **Grtsamada** firmly believes that every Guest or Invitee, who has come to attend the magnificent event is under the obligation of the host **Agni**. Hence in all 16 verses of the hymn **Rv-2.1**, the Composer has paid maximum attention to **Agni alone** despite the fact that the content of hymn generally demonstrates launching of the names of several Deities conceived by Vedic People during the **pre-Rigvedic period** [1, 2].

But the most beautiful part of the said hymn is, keeping main focus on God **Agni**, the Poet has successfully in a brief and pleasant way explained the roles of all Deities known to him to the listeners (now readers) by **name with their basic qualities**. Hence the hymn **Rv-2.1** may be seen as on behalf of **Agni**, **Grtsamada** gave an **inaugural address** on the occasion of a special **Yajna** episode to introduce **Other Deities** present in the ancient Vedic Philosophy.

A. The very first verse Rv-2.1,1 briefly describes the Origin of Agni in the Universe:

Rv-2.1,1: tvamagne dyubhistvamāśuśukṣaṇistvamadbhyastvamaśmanas pari | tvaṃ vanebhyastvamoṣadhībhyastvaṃ nṛṇāṃ nṛpate jāyase śuciḥ // त्वमंग्ने द्युभिस्त्वमांशुशुक्षणिस्त्वमृद्ध्यस्त्वमश्मंनस्परिं । त्वं वनेंभ्यस्त्वमोषंधीभ्यस्त्वं नृणां नृंपते जायसे शुचिंः ॥ # Thou, Agni, shining in thy glory through the days, art brought to life from out the waters, from the stone:

From out the forest trees and herbs that grow on ground, thou, Sovran Lord of men art generated pure.

Description given in the above verse informs us that the Poet has proper knowledge of the three different ways of the **creation of Agni** in the world. In the beginning, the Poet makes it clear that **shining flame** or an **intense heat** is the identity of **God Agni**.

Agni in the world is born from;

- 1. Waters (indirectly means the rise of **fireball/Sun** from the oceanic waters),
- 2. Due to rubbing action of one stone over another means through friction,
- 3. In the forest, from trees and shrubs means wildfire or forest fire.

But the present Agni (of Yajna) the Lord of Man has been purely shaped for the Man.

B. Rv-2.1,2 presents 'God Agni' as the multifunctional Priest cum Worshipper:

Rv-2.1,2: tavāgne hotram tava potram ṛtviyam tava neṣṭram tvamaghnid ṛtāyataḥ /
tava praśāstram tvamadhvarīyasi brahmā cāsi ghṛhapatiśca no dame //
तवांग्ने होत्रं तवं पोत्रमृत्वियं तवं नेष्ट्रं त्वमृग्निष्टंतायृतः । तवं प्रशास्त्रं त्वमंध्वरीयसि ब्रह्मा चासिं गृहपंतिश्च नो दमें ॥
Thine is the Herald's task and Cleanser's duly timed; Leader art thou, and Kindler for the pious man.
Thou art Director, thou the ministering Priest: thou art the Brahman, Lord and Master in our home.

In the above verse, the Poet states that **Agni** is **Hotar** or the invoker of the Gods. **He** is **Potar** means the Leader of the team. **He** also works as the fire initiator (**Agnidh**) who follows the ancient world order (**Rta**). **He** is the most **knowledgeable** and **Universally Fame Priest** (**Brahma- all knower**) present in the world and the **Master of the House** (**Griha-Pati**) as well. In other words, **in totality**, the Poet illustrates God **Agni** as the **Yajna rite knower and performer**, and **the Lord of his home**.

C. Verse Rv-2.1,9 defines the intimate Relationship the Priests have with God Agni:

Rv-2.1,9: tvāmagne pitaramiṣṭibhirnarastvāṃ bhrātrāya śamyā tanūrucam |
tvaṃ putro bhavasi yaste.avidhat tvaṃ sakhā suśevaḥ pāsyādhṛṣaḥ //
त्वामंग्ने पितरंमिष्टिभिर्नरस्त्वां भात्राय शम्यां तन्रुचम । त्वं पूत्रो भवसि यस्तेऽविधत्त्वं सखां सुशेवंः पास्याधृषंः ॥

Agni, men seek thee as a **Father** with their prayers, win thee, bright-formed, to **brotherhood** with holy act.

Thou art a **Son** to him who duly worships thee, and as a **trusty Friend** thou guardest from attack.

Through the verse Rv-2.1,9 the Composer says that the Priests look at God Agni as-

- **Father** when they recall **him** through **prayer** to fulfil their desire/wishes.
- **Brother** when they approach **him** for the help needed to conduct ritual.
- Son when they create fire for Yajna/ Sacrifice (shaped by the Priests).
- **Friend** when they need protection from the foes.

In short, above verse portrays the different types of close relations the Poet has with God **Agni**.

D. Verses Rv-2.1,4 and Rv-2.1,7 indicate the Basic Qualities of Adityas:

Rv-2.1,4: tvamagne rājā varuņo dhṛtavratastvaṃ mitro bhavasi dasma īḍyaḥ /
tvamaryamā satpatiryasya sambhujaṃ tvamaṃśo vidathe deva bhājayuḥ //
त्वमंग्ने राजा वरुंणो धृतव्रंतस्त्वं मित्रो भंवसि दस्म ईड्यंः । त्वमंर्यमा सत्यंतिर्यस्यं सम्भुजं त्वमंशों विदर्थं देव भाज्युः ॥
Agni, thou art King Varuna whose laws stand fast; as Mitra, Wonder-Worker, thou must be implored.

Aryaman, heroes' Lord, art thou, enriching all, and liberal Amsa in the synod, O thou God.

Rv-2.1,7: tvamagne draviṇodā araṃkṛte tvaṃ devaḥ savitā ratnadhāasi |
tvaṃ bhago nṛpate vasva īśiṣe tvaṃ pāyurdame yaste'vidhat ||
त्वमंग्ने द्रविणोदा अंरुंकृते त्वं देवः संविता रंत्वधा अंसि । त्वं भगों नृपते वस्वं ईशिषे त्वं पा्युर्दमे यस्तेऽविंधत् ॥

Giver of wealth art thou to him who honours thee; thou art God Savitar, granter of precious things.

As Bhaga, Lord of men! thou rulest over wealth, and guardest in his house him who hath served thee well.

In the above two verses, the Composer has brought out the following key characteristic features of the **Adityas**, the **First Generation Vedic Gods** found in **Rigved**.

Varuna as the king and the *Rta* implementer--- Rv-2.1,4

Mitra as the wonder worker and hence the most loved God---Rv-2.1,4

Aryaman as the enricher who makes the life of everybody enjoyable -- Rv-2.1,4

Amsha as the share distributor and hence liberal giver-- Rv-2.1,4

Savitar as the wealth or treasure giver --- Rv-2.1,7

Bhaga as the master of the men/guardian of the house--- Rv-2.1,7

Note: Although there is no direct mention of **Daksha** the **seventh Aditya** in the hymn, but the presence of word **Dakshi**/ दक्षि in the verse **Rv-2.1,10** implies that the term was known to Poet.

E. Verse Rv-2.1,3 depicts Basic Attributes of Indra and his other two best Friends:

Rv-2.1,3: tvamagna indro vṛṣabhaḥ satāmasi tvaṃ viṣṇururughāyo namasyaḥ /
tvaṃ brahmā rayivid brahmaṇas pate tvaṃ vidhartaḥsacase purandhyā ||
त्वमंग्र इन्द्रों वृषभः सतामंसि त्वं विष्णृंरुरुगायो नंमस्यः । त्वं ब्रह्मा रंथिविद्वंह्मणस्पते त्वं विंधर्तः सचसे प्रंध्या

Hero of Heroes, Agni! Thou art Indra, thou art Visnu of the Mighty Stride, adorable:

Thou, **Brahmanaspati**, the **Brahman** finding wealth: thou, O Sustainer, with thy wisdom tendest us.

In the above verse, the Poet has mentioned three different batch-mates/Gods.

Indra as the **Bull** (*Vrishabha*) manifesting, by birth **aggressive nature** of the God.

Vishnu/Visnu--- wide-mover means unstoppable or free to move anywhere.

Brahmanaspati----master of the Universal and Insightful Thoughts, finder of the wealth who is closely associated with Goddess Purandri.

F. Verse Rv-2.1,6 places Rudra, Maruts, Vata together along with Pushan:

Rv-2.1,6: tvamagne rudro asuro maho divastvaṃ śardho mārutaṃ pṛkṣa īśiṣe /
tvaṃ vātairaruṇairyāsi śaṃghayastvaṃ pūṣā vidhataḥ pāsi nu tmanā ||
त्वमंग्ने रुद्रो असुंरो महो द्विवस्त्वं शर्धो मारुंतं पृक्ष ईशिषे । त्वं वातैंररुणैर्यासि शंग्यस्त्वं पूषा विंधतः पांसि नु त्मनां ॥

Rudra art thou, the Asura of mighty heaven: thou art the Maruts' host, thou art the Lord of food,

Thou goest with red winds: bliss hast thou in thine home. As Pusan thou thyself protectest worshippers.

In this verse, the Poet has brought three **Windy Gods** namely, **Rudra**, **Maruts** and **Vata** under one roof with the order of **decreasing severity** (among the three, **Rudra** is the most severe God) and **Pushan** who protects the worshipper.

G. Verse Rv-2.1,5 mentions distinct role of God Tvastar:

Rv-2.1,5: tvamagne tvaṣṭā vidhate suvīryaṃ tava grāvon mitramahaḥ sajātyam |

tvamāśuhemā rariṣe svaśvyaṃ tvaṃ narāṃ śardho asi purūvasuḥ //
व्वमंग्ने त्वष्टां विधृते सुवीर्यं तवु ग्नावों मित्रमहः सजा्त्यंम् । त्वमांशूहेमां रिष्णे स्वश्व्यं त्वं न्रां शर्धी असि पुरूवसंः ॥

Thou givest strength, as **Tvastar**, to the worshipper: thou wielding Mitra's power hast kinship with the Dames.

Thou, urging thy fleet coursers, givest noble steeds: a host of heroes art thou with great store of wealth

In the aforementioned verse, the Poet has introduced God **Tvastar** who provides strength to the worshipper. The Composer further tells us that it is **Agni** who has given noble steeds (*asvas*) to the Gods.

H. Verse Rv-2.1,10 signals Ribhu and Vaja:

Rv-2.1,10: tvamagna ṛbhurāke namasyastvam vājasya kṣumato rāya īśiṣe /
tvam vi bhāsyanu dakṣi dāvane tvam viśikṣurasiyajñamātaniḥ //
व्यमंग्र ऋभुराके नंमस्यस्त्वं वाजंस्य क्षुमतों राय ईशिषे । त्वं वि भास्यनुं दक्षि दावने त्वं विशिक्षुंरिस यज्ञमातिनिः ॥
A Rbhu art thou, Agni, near to be adored thou art the Sovran Lord of foodful spoil and wealth.
Thou shinest brightly forth, thou burnest to bestow: pervading sacrifice, thou lendest us thine help.

Through the above verse, the Composer has successfully introduced **Ribhu** and **Vaja** the two brothers who made significant contribution during the development stage of **Yajna** ritual as the divine beings (out of three brothers, the name **Vibhavan** is missing).

I. Verse Rv-2.1,11 provides the names of the Four Vedic Goddesses at one place:

Rv-2.1,11: tvamagne aditirdeva dāśuṣe tvaṃ hotrā bhāratī vardhaseghirā |

tvamiļā ṣatahimāsi dakṣase tvaṃ vṛṭrahā vasupate sarasvatī //

त्वमंग्ने अदितिर्देव दाश्षे त्वं होत्रा भारंती वर्धसे गिरा । त्विमळां शतिहैंमासि दक्षंसे त्वं वृंत्रहा वंस्पते सरंस्वती ॥

Thou, God, art Aditi to him who offers gifts: thou, Hotri Bharati, art strengthened by the song.

Thou art the hundred-wintered IIa to give strength, Lord of Wealth! Vrtra-slayer and Sarasvati.

In the verse **Rv-2.1,11**; along with **Aditi** (mother of **Seven Adityas**), the names of the three Goddesses **IIa**, **Bharati** and **Saraswati** appear together but outside the **Apri Suktas**.

Ila--- A long lived person who remained alert till lived.

Bharati--- Invoker, who introduced the concept of inviting Gods by chanting Mantra.

Saraswati--- River who negates **Vritra** / an atmospheric Demon.

J. Verses Rv-2.1,13 to 16 highlight the main purpose of Yajna/Sacrifice:

As discussed earlier, after visualising various Deities known to him in the form of **Agni**, in the last four verses **Rv-2.1.13** to **16**; the Poet shifts his attention to proper **Yajna activity**. In these verses, the Composer has now described the actual role of **Agni of Yajna** in the ritual.

Rv-2.1,13: tvāmagna ādityāsa āsyaṃ tvāṃ jihvāṃ śucayaścakrirekave |
tvāṃ rātiṣāco adhvareṣu saścire tve devā haviradantyāhutam ||
व्वामंग्र आदित्यासं आ्रस्यं त्वां जिह्नां शुचंयश्रक्रिरे कवे । त्वां रांतिषाचां अध्वरेषुं सिश्चरे त्वे देवा ह्विरंद्रन्त्याहुंतम् ॥
Thee, Agni, have the Adityas taken as their mouth; the Bright Ones have made thee, O Sage, to be their tongue. They who love offerings cling to thee at solemn rites: by thee the Gods devour the duly offered food.

Rv-2.1,14: tve agne viśve anṛtāso adruha āsā devā haviradantyāhutam | tvayā martāsaḥ svadanta āsutiṃ tvaṃ gharbho vīrudhāṃ jajñiṣe śuciḥ || त्वे अंग्रे विश्वें अमृतांसो अदुहं आसा देवा ह्विरंदुन्त्याहुंतम् । त्वया मर्तासः स्वदन्त आसुतिं त्वं गर्भी वीरुधां जिज्ञेषे शुचिंः ॥ # By thee, O Agni, all the Immortal guileless Gods eat with thy mouth the oblation that is offered them.

By thee do mortal men give sweetness to their drink. Bright art thou born, the embryo of the plants of earth.

Rv-2.1,15: tvaṃ tān saṃ ca prati cāsi majmanāgne sujāta pra ca devaricyase | pṛkṣo yadatra mahinā vi te bhuvadanu dyāvāpṛthivī rodasī ubhe || त्वं तान्सं च प्रतिं चासि मुज्मनाग्नें सुजातु प्र चं देव रिच्यसे । पृक्षो यदत्रं मिह्ना वि ते भुवदनु द्यावांपृथिवी रोदंसी उभे ॥ # With these thou art united, Agni; yea thou, God of noble birth, surpassest them in majesty, which, through the power of good, here spreads abroad from thee, diffused through both the worlds, throughout the earth and heaven.

Rv-2.1,16: ye stotṛbhyo goagrāmaśvapeśasamagne rātimupasṛjanti sūrayaḥ / asmāñca tāṃśca pra hi neṣi vasya ā bṛhad vadema vidathe suvīrāḥ // ये स्तोतृभ्यो गोअंग्रामश्वंपेशसमग्नें रातिमुंपसृजन्तिं सूरयंः । अस्माञ्च ताँश्च प्र हि नेषि वस्य आ बृहद्वंदेम विदथें सुवीरांः ॥ # The princely worshippers who send to those who sing thy praise, O Agni, guerdon graced with kine and steeds,

Lead thou both these and us forward to higher bliss. With brave men in the assembly may we speak aloud.

The key points noticed in the above four verses are discussed below;

- Rv-2.1,13: Adityas have made Agni of Yajna as their mouth and other Gods are using him as the tongue so as to taste the Oblations offered in the ritual.
- **Rv-2.1,14:** Innocent Immortals/ Gods enjoy the oblations offered in the **fire of Yajna**. But with the help of **Agni**, the mortals sweeten their drink (**Milk** or **Soma**?).
- **Rv-2.1,15**: **Agni** is the God **born to perfection** who surpasses all other Gods. His fame has reached all over the world, beyond Heaven and Earth.
- **Rv-2.1,16**: **Agni**, please give **cows and asvas** to your sincere lauders. May we get **brave people** as our patrons to praise you loudly.

Contents of the four verses manifest that now the Poet is speaking about actual Yajna ritual wherein, the Composer states that various Gods including Adityas use Agni of Yajna as the tongue to taste the oblations that are offered in the sacrifice. Poet further says that Agni of Yajna is the well-known God as his name and fame has surpassed all other Gods. In the last verse, Rv-2.1,16 the Composer appeals to Agni of Yajna to bestow the worshippers cows and asvas and also expects more warriors/rulers to come forward to participate in Yajna ceremony to praise the invited Gods collectively/loudly.

K. Special Observations on the hymn Rv-2.1 [1, 2]

1. Presence of the numerical terms sahasrāni/thousand, śatā/hundred and daśa/ten:

In the verse **Rv-2.1,8**, the Poet has used special numerical terms **Sahastra**, **Shata** and **Dasha** to describe the mighty power and mastery of the **Fire God/Agni** over all the things present in the world.

Rv-2.1,8: tvamagne dama ā viśpatim viśastvām rājānam suvidatram rñjate / tvam viśvāni svanīka patyase tvam **sahasrāņi śatā daśa** prati //

त्वामंग्ने दम् आ विश्पतिं विश्कर्त्वां राजांनं सुविदत्रंमृञ्जते । त्वं विश्वांनि स्वनीक पत्यसे त्वं सहस्राणि शृता दश् प्रतिं ॥
From the basic knowledge of the present-day Mathematics, we can say that,

Sahastra/thousand or 1,000 is 10 times greater than 100.Shata/hundred or 100 is 10 times greater than 10.Dasha/ten or 10 is 10 times greater than 1.

It means to say that the Poet knowingly selected and placed the three distinct numbers in the **decreasing order** in such a way that when moved from **left to right** (from মূল্মাणি to যুৱা to ব্যু), the next number is **10 times smaller** (1/10) than the number placed on its **left side**.

Additionally, the appearance of the terms *sahasrāṇi śatā daśa*/মূहस्राणि যুৱা दशु in the said verse also manifests the **completeness** of a particular numerical series. For example:

Digit Ten/Dasha depicts a series that starts with Natural number ${\bf 1}$ and ends at number ${\bf 10}$.

Digit Hundred/Shata shows a series that begins with number 1 and finishes at number 100.

Same thing holds true for the digit **Thousand/Sahastra** also.

Based on the application of numbers like *sahasrāṇi śatā daśa*/सहस्रांणि श्ता दश in the verse **Rv-2.1,8**, it can be concluded that the Poet **Grtsamada** was fully aware of the **Digit** that imparts 'completeness or exactness' to a series of the Numbers used at that time (may be called as the **limiting the continuity of number series at the definite point** or place value).

Above information makes it clear that since **pre-Rigvedic time**, **Vedic People** had proper understanding of the **base-10/ten** or **Decimal Number System** as it was devised by their ancestors and then orally transferred from one generation to other.

Practically speaking, the numbers *sahasrāṇi śatā daśa*/মূहस्रांणि श्वता दश represent the progress of the **Decimal Numerical System** through different stages during **pre-Rigvedic era**.

Please note that in the development of modern science and technology the **Decimal number system** has played the prominent role.

2. Brahmanaspati and Brihaspati:

In the verse **Rv-2.1,3**; along with **Indra**, the Poet has introduced God **Brahmanaspati** as *tvaṃ brahmā rayivid brahmaṇaspate*/ त्वं ब्रह्मा रंयिविद्धंह्मणस्पते, but in the entire hymn, there is no mention of God **Brihasapti**.

However, the **Mandala-2** Poet has addressed both Gods together in the hymn **Rv-2.23**. It means to say that the characters **Brahmanaspati** and **Brihaspati** form a divine couple who are generally believed to be the bestowers of the profound knowledge, and the special word power respectively to the Priestly People.

Hence **Brahmanaspati** can be seen as the provider of **प्रजा/ Prajna** or the highest level of wisdom and insight, and **Brihaspati** as the granter of **प्रतिभा/ Pratibha** or brilliance or natural endowments or very special skill or spontaneity in creating and using new words or vocabulary (lucid speech giver) that is necessary for the Poets.

In practical sense, the duo **Brahmanaspati** and **Brihaspati** can be considered as **One** God having *two divine heads* as both are described together in the Mandala-2 hymns Rv-2.23 to 26, but depicted to possess distinct divine qualities.

In sum,

Brahmanaspati stands for **Insight**/ **Intelligence** or a **New Thought Provoker** for the Priests.

Brihaspati means Exceptional Poetic skills Provider for the Priests.

Note: In the Hindu legends composed after the Vedic period, **Lord Brahma** is commonly depicted to possess **four heads**. Probably, the idea of Hindu God **Brahma** or Demon **Ravana** having more than one head would have been originated from the two **Rigvedic Characters Brahmanaspati** and **Brihaspati**.

3. In the entire hymn, no direct reference of Asvins, Usha, Surya, Soma, Parjanya etc.

L. Concluding Remarks:

- ➤ Through the composed Song of Praise, the Poet of the hymn **Rv-2.1** has set the ball of Vedic Philosophy rolling as he has successfully introduced various Deities fashioned by his ancestors during the **pre-Rigvedic period** with their key characteristic features.
- ➤ Practically speaking, the Poem **Rv-2.1** marks the beginning of the **Rigvedic Era** as at a glance, it provides 'who's who' in the Vedic Ideology (listing out the Vedic Deities with the basic qualities).
- ➤ In a short and sweet manner, the Poet has introduced functions performed or the work assigned to various Deities since ancient time.
- ➤ Poet sees every God in the form "Agni of Yajna", when he categorically states that 'Agni encompasses every form of God'.
- ➤ In summation, content of the hymn **Rv-2.1** briefly outlines the history of development of ancient **Vedic Thoughts**.

Based on the description given in the various verses of the hymn **Rv-2.1**, it can be said that at the outset, while giving a **keynote address**, the Poet has introduced different sources of **Agni/fire known to him**, and then one by one announced the important Gods and Goddesses of the Vedic World including **some mortals** like **Ribhu**, **Vaja**, **Ila** and **Bharati**.

In the last four verses of the hymn, the Composer has defined the very purpose of **Yajna.** Its main intention was to please or pacify the **Deities of their Imagination** by giving the oblations in the **Agni/fire** and then to place various demands on the Gods of their likings.

In short, **Grtsamada**, the Lead Composer of **Mandala-2** has delivered an **introductory talk** in the form of the hymn **Rv-2.1**, but addressed various Vedic Gods who are invited for **Yajna**, in terms of **Agni**. In the last verse, the Poet has made it clear that without the patrons belonging to the Brave, Rich and Noble families, Priests cannot conduct grand **Yajna**.

M. References:

- 1. "Rig Veda" (Bilingual), Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith (1896) in PDF
- 2. Monier-Williams Dictionary.

Note: Mandala-2 hymns Rv-2.29; 31; 32; 41 are addressed to either *Visvedevas* or All Gods, but their contents do not match with the information found in the hymn Rv-2.1.